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# Herald Union



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Serving the military communities of the 104th Area Support Group

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## News flash

### Doctor's appointments

The U.S. Army health clinics in Wiesbaden and Dexheim will implement and train on the Composite Health Care System 2 this month. Available appointments will be reduced by 50 percent because medical personnel will input data during appointments. Appointments will also be longer than usual. The CHCS2 will improve care by keeping an electronic record of every portion of a patient's medical care, officials said.

### Case lot sale

Commissaries will be selling items by the case at the end of May. Visit the Bad Nauheim Commissary May 27-28, the Baumholder Commissary May 28-29, Hanau May 27-29, Giessen May 28-29 or Wiesbaden May 28-29 for savings. (DeCA Release)

### Leisure Needs Survey this month

If you get a 2005 Morale Welfare and Recreation Leisure Needs Survey fill out the form and return it or take advantage of the online option using the instructions on the paper copy. The survey is used to improve MWR activities.

### AAFES job fairs

The Army and Air Force Exchange Service will hold job fairs at the Giessen Burger King courtyard May 17 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and at Hanau's Wolfgang Shopping Center parking lot May 18 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

## Testing emergency readiness

### Military officials work closely with German first responders for disaster preparedness

By Karl Weisel  
104th Area Support Group Public Affairs Office

An explosion in a 104th Area Support Group housing area kills dozens of people and releases poisonous gas which threatens to spread throughout the area. At the same time a plane crashes into a nearby barracks, setting several buildings on fire.

Quick response by firefighters, paramedics and other emergency responders is the key to saving lives and preventing further damage. Soldiers and their families count on local German and American emergency services



Photo by Karl Weisel

Brig. Gen. Oscar "Randy" Anderson (right) and 104th ASG officials examine equipment during a visit to the Main-Kinzig County Disaster Response Center in Gelnhausen.

to come to their rescue in the case of an emergency.

A U.S. Army Europe disaster response exercise May 10-12 tested the 104th ASG and

local German authorities' ability to react quickly in the case of an emergency such as the fictional scenario mentioned above.

"It's really tough to deal with an ambiguous situation like a disaster," said Col.

**See Emergency readiness on page 3**

## Giessen MP earns medal for heroism

By Troy Darr  
104th Area Support Group Public Affairs Office

As a member of the South Bay Young Marines, Pfc. Andrea Abalos never imagined that just a couple of years later she would receive an Army Commendation Medal for exceptional heroism in performance of her duties as a Military Police officer.

One year into her Army enlistment, Abalos, an MP with the 527th Military Police Company in Giessen, was on temporary duty in Hanau when she was dispatched to respond to an arms room activity alarm

on Pioneer Kaserne April 8.

Entering the basement of the building, Abalos noticed an arms room door open with the gate unsecured. Inside was a Soldier dressed in civilian clothes.

Abalos said the Soldier had problems answering her questions and could not remember his birthday. It was then she noticed a half-empty bottle of 151-proof rum.

"I asked him if his NCO was available and he said 'No, I'm in charge of the arms room,'" said Abalos. "He started to get loud then, but I kept asking him questions.



Photo by Troy Darr

Pfc. Andrea Abalos

"Finally he said, 'I'm going to tell you the truth. I'm going to do something highly

illegal. I'm going to blow my brains out.'

"I was scared, but I knew I had to get him out of the arms room and away from the weapons," she said.

As the armorer tried to close the gate to lock out Abalos, she stuck her clipboard between the gate and the door jamb.

"I was holding the clipboard in one hand and trying to call for backup with the other," said Abalos. "I finally got the door open and grabbed him by the sweater.

"Somehow I was in the arms room with him. Then we were  
**See Heroism on page 3**



# Commentary

## Command sponsorship affects Soldier morale

By Timothy Pies  
104th Area Support Group  
assistant inspector general

An issue that affects the morale of many Soldiers with family members assigned overseas is the process of gaining command sponsorship.

For many career-status Soldiers with families, command sponsorship is already approved before their arrival.

However for most soldiers who come to Europe directly from Advanced Individual Training, for those who marry after their arrival, or for some who change their minds and decide they want to bring family after their arrival, command sponsorship approval becomes necessary.

One of the principal requirements of command sponsorship is that the Soldier must be on a three-year tour. Consequently, Soldiers desiring command sponsorship but currently on 24-month tours must either extend or reenlist to meet the three-year requirement.

To ensure that appropriate medical care is available to serve a family member's special needs, a Department of the Army Form 5888 (Family Member Deployment Screening Sheet) must be completed on each family member by a designated medical health professional.

The data on the form will also determine if the family member should be enrolled in the Exceptional Family Member Program.

After the Soldier's chain

of command verifies that he or she has met the requirements for command sponsorship, a DA Form 4187 (Personnel Action Request) must be submitted to the local Personnel Services Battalion where the Soldier's packet is reviewed and then sent forward to 1st

Personnel Command for final approval.

Once command sponsorship has been approved, the Soldier must in-process at the local Housing Office and be placed on the appropriate waiting list.

As soon as a housing unit is assigned to the Soldier, his or her family will be authorized to coordinate with the Transportation Office at a continental United States installation located nearest them to arrange for the shipment of their household goods as well as to obtain airline tickets.

Soldiers who are thinking about bringing family members to Europe must also ensure they all have valid passports.

Soldiers should never attempt to bring family members into the command at their own expense without receiving an approval for command sponsorship and being assigned family quarters, or they will not receive any reimbursement for travel expenses.

More importantly, Soldiers must use their chain of command for assistance and follow-up during the entire command sponsorship request process.



## Bell sends: Sponsorship promotes good first impression

By Gen. B.B. Bell  
U.S. Army Europe commander

We are an Army of people. Every Soldier, family member and civilian employee deserves to be brought into a new unit with effective personal contact. Newly assigned personnel and their families develop their first — and perhaps most critical — impression of the unit and installation based on how well they are received. These impressions will significantly affect a new arrival's attitude toward his or her assignment, which in turn affects unit cohesion, retention, morale and discipline. For this reason sponsorship is a vital command responsibility. We need commanders and leaders at all levels to effectively lead and manage their sponsorship program, select the right people to be sponsors and ensure these individuals are trained and given the resources they need to succeed.

To revitalize and ensure the success of our sponsorship program, Army in Europe Regulation 600-8-8, *Military and Civilian Sponsorship*; and USAREUR Pam-

phlet 600-8-8, *How To Be a Good Sponsor*, are being revised and were slated to be published in mid- to late April. It is my intent that these publications will:

- Require units to have written sponsorship management plans and to update their plans each year.

- Prescribe policy on sponsorship leader training.

- Require civilian employees to receive sponsorship training before they perform duties as sponsors.

- Incorporate guidance on using DA Form 4856 to counsel sponsors on their duties and responsibilities.

- Update S-Gate and Army Community Service sponsorship training.

- Empower commanders to execute their unit sponsorship program with precision.

Sponsors must be good listeners, knowledgeable about their community, able to anticipate the needs of the individuals they sponsor and will-



ing to provide selfless support. Leaders must ensure sponsors clearly understand their responsibilities by counseling them and providing constructive feedback.

Although sponsors are responsible for carrying out sponsorship duties, sponsorship must be a commander's program.

When properly executed, an effective sponsorship program successfully integrates newly arrived Soldiers, civilians and their families into the unit.

In our fast-paced environment, sponsorship has to be a top priority. I want commanders to review the guidance on sponsorship in Army in Europe Command Policy Letter 13, and reenergize their unit sponsorship programs. Every effort must be made to ensure all new arrivals are properly received and integrated so that we can continue to execute with excellence Any Mission, Anywhere.

## Letters to the editor

### Exchange student praises website

My name is Hannah Ellen, and I am a Rotary Exchange student from Australia. I am 17 years old and must go to school in the 11th grade in Hanau. I am currently living in Bruchköbel near Hanau, and I found your Internet site about the things to do around and in Hanau, and I just wan

to say how wonderful it is. My German isn't the best (but is rapidly improving) and it helps to know what's going on around these towns.



I have been living here for three months already, and I love it here. But I find it's very difficult to understand what is going on. o once more thank you

for this interesting site, and I will keep looking at it for more information.

Hannah Ellen  
Bruchköbel

**Editor's note:** Information about upcoming events can be found at [www.hanau.army.mil/garrison/sites/local](http://www.hanau.army.mil/garrison/sites/local) or the *Herald Union Online* at [www.104thasg.hanau.army.mil/hunion/Hunionupdates.htm](http://www.104thasg.hanau.army.mil/hunion/Hunionupdates.htm).

### Herald Union masthead

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# News and features

## News flash

### Fine arts winner

Giessen's Davis Threet was recognized for his collage "Half of Me" at the Boys and Girls Clubs of America Regional Fine Arts Exhibition held in South Korea. Threet's work will go on to compete in the BGCA National Competition.

### AAFES fuel prices

The Army and Air Force Exchange Service announced that fuel prices rose about 20 cents a gallon in Germany in May.



### American heroes

Marvel Comics and the Army and Air Force Exchange Service teamed up to produce a New Avengers comic book honoring the men and women of the U.S. Army and Air Force. The free comic book is being released during special events such as welcome home ceremonies and tent sales. For more information about where to pick up a complimentary copy call your local post exchange.

### Job openings

Choctaw Management Services Enterprise is looking for a licensed social worker or registered nurse for the New Parent Education and Support Program Office in Hanau. Send resume, cover letter and copy of license to [mariela.fernandez@ima-e.army.mil](mailto:mariela.fernandez@ima-e.army.mil) or fax to mil 370-4091. Choctaw also has full and part-time positions open for nutritionists, dietitians and nurses in Hanau. Send resume, cover letter and copy of licenses to [kimberly.spano@ramstein.af.mil](mailto:kimberly.spano@ramstein.af.mil) or fax to civ (06371) 47 9383.

### Enlistment bonus

Qualified active Army recruits who enlist in any Army military occupational specialty for three or more years and are willing to report for training by May 30 may be eligible for seasonal enlistment bonuses of up to \$14,000 which may be combined with other existing Army bonuses for a total of up to \$20,000. Recruits will receive their initial payment of \$10,000 upon successful completion of initial entry training. The remaining bonus will be paid in annual increments. Enlistment bonuses of less than \$10,000 will be paid in lump sum upon successful completion of initial entry training. To learn more about Army opportunities visit your Army recruiter or log on to [www.goarmy.com](http://www.goarmy.com). (U.S. Army Recruiting Command Release)

### IMO Conference May 17

All signal officers, information management officers and interested personnel are invited to attend the 102nd Signal Battalion's Information Management Officer Conference May 17 from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Hanau Community Activity Center on Fliegerhorst Kaserne. Registration starts at 8:30 a.m. To register before the day of the conference send an email to [IMOConference@cmtymail.104asg.army.mil](mailto:IMOConference@cmtymail.104asg.army.mil). Call Willie Walker at mil 337-5929.

## Emergency readiness . . . . .

### Continued from page 1

Herman "Tracy" Williams III, 104th ASG commander. "The more planning that goes into preparing for these particular situations, the better off we'll be."

Members of the 104th ASG staff along with Brig. Gen. Oscar "Randy" Anderson, senior mission commander and 1st Armored Division's assistant division commander for support, visited the Main-Kinzig County Disaster Response Center in Gelnhausen April 27 to learn more about how exactly disaster response is conducted.

"We needed to see what kind of capabilities they have, what their response times are like," said Anderson. "And then what we need to do is to coordinate with them and possibly provide augmentation."

"It is very clear that the Germans have a very mature system, and it is also very clear they are in fact the first responders to any incidents that would happen," Anderson said.

German and American firefighters demonstrated various forms of equipment used to decontaminate individuals and equipment exposed to deadly chemicals, mobile containment facilities, firefighting gear and other state-of-the-art tools used in emergency situations.

Walter Dressbach, director of disaster management for Main-Kinzig County, described how his organization keeps a vigilant eye on all emergency situations within this part of the state of Hessen. A control center with instant Internet access manned around the clock by staff at the center keeps track of

emergency responses throughout the county.

"Last year we responded about 60,000 times," Dressbach said, explaining that some half a million emergency calls come in annually.

"Within a five-minute walk you can find all emergency services co-located in this area," said Dressbach, explaining that everything from the police headquarters to the animal protection agency, Red Cross to water rescue organization occupies office and working space in the former Coleman Kaserne in Gelnhausen. "We are responsible for all firefighters, search and rescue dogs, medical help agencies and similar organizations in the county."

State regulations require a response to emergencies within 10 minutes, he said, explaining that their average is an eight-minute response time in 98 percent of all cases.

When it is determined an emergency situation is of such a scale that it requires a coordinated response by the disaster team then the alert level is raised and more specialists are called in to make up the response team.

The U.S. Army handed back the Coleman Kaserne installation to the German government in 1991. It was established as the Disaster Response Center for Main-Kinzig County in 2004, said Wolfgang Köhler, county fire inspector and chief of disaster preparedness. "We began planning for the center in 2002."

Köhler said officials looked at various sites throughout the 150-kilometer-long and 50-kilometer-wide county before settling on the former U.S. military installation. "With such a large area and so many vacant buildings it provided the opportunity for all of our agencies to move together. And this is a central location."

He added that officials from all over Germany have visited the center and "are in awe" of the facility.

"You never want to do anything for the first time in a crisis," said the 104th ASG commander. "And so it's very important for us to establish a plan for training to ensure that our liaisons and the staff at the lowest operational and tactical levels know each other — that there's a habitual familiar relationship."

By working closely with their German counterparts, U.S. military officials "know they can depend on us, and we know we can depend on them," Williams said.



Photo by Karl Weisel

Emergency services dispatcher Stephan Kraft monitors emergency response calls at the Main-Kinzig County Disaster Response Center in Gelnhausen.

## Heroism . . . . .

### Continued from page 1

in the hallway wrestling. As I got him against the wall I saw another Soldier coming down the stairs and asked for help. Together we pinned him against the wall until my backup came."

Abalos was awarded the medal by Col. Herman "Tracy" Williams III, 104th Area Support Group commander, in a ceremony on Hanau's Yorkhof

Kaserne May 3.

"I always wanted to be in law enforcement," said Abalos. "After five years in the South Bay Young Marines I realized I just liked the military lifestyle. I was good at it. When I talked to my recruiter it seemed like everything was planned out. I just needed guidance."

Abalos returns to Giessen at the end of May.

# News and features

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## Vitamin supplements not always necessary

**By Kay Klumpyan**

*Hanau Women, Infants,  
Children-Overseas Program*

Many of us take vitamin or mineral supplements to compensate for less than adequate diets and lifestyles.

Certain vitamin and mineral substances have been marketed as having near-magical abilities in preventing or curing disease, boosting energy,

or even preventing baldness.

About 40 percent of Americans take at least one supplement a day, contributing to this multi-billion dollar industry.

Based on the overeating habits of Americans and our vast food supply, it is unlikely that a supplement is needed. However here is a list of conditions where it may be war-

ranted:

- ✦ You are consuming less than 1200 calories a day.

- ✦ You tend to eat on the run and often consume snacks or other foods lacking in quality nutrition.

- ✦ You eat fast food regularly (four to six days a week.)

- ✦ You don't eat fruits and vegetables on a daily basis.

- ✦ You smoke and drink too

much alcohol.

- ✦ You have a medical condition requiring additional vitamins or minerals.

- ✦ You are pregnant, breastfeeding or have excessive monthly bleeding.

- ✦ For some vegetarians.

Vitamins obtained from natural foods are preferred over supplements. The body better absorbs the vitamins and min-

erals in foods plus you will be getting extra benefits such as fiber, antioxidants and phytochemicals.

The Food and Nutrition Board has recommended that people avoid taking dietary supplements that exceed 100 percent of the Recommended Dietary Allowance in any one day. Most people can, and should, obtain essential nutrients from a variety of foods.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that exclusively breastfed infants starting at two months receive vitamin D supplementation in multivitamin form since supplements containing only vitamin D are generally too concentrated to be safe for routine use.

Taking a vitamin supplement as an "insurance policy" in case your diet does not supply sufficient vitamins is acceptable. Although, it is unlikely that you will need such a supplement, most health authorities agree that there is no harm in taking a simple vitamin and mineral supplement, provided it does not exceed 100 percent of the RDA for nutrients.

WIC-O provides nutrition education and food supplementation to eligible participants stationed overseas.

Call the Hanau WIC-O office to see if you are eligible at civ (06181) 88-9636.

The WIC-O Büdingen office hours are the first and third Wednesday of each month from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. In Büdingen call civ (06042) 80 251 or the Hanau office for more information.



## New moms rave about medical care

*Editor's note: This is the second in a series on the recent baby boom in the Wiesbaden and Dexheim military communities.*

**By Cassandra Kardeke**

**221st Base Support Battalion Public Affairs Office**

Discovering one is "expecting" comes with many different emotions; joy, anxiety and nervousness. For patients in Wiesbaden and Dexheim the experience includes learning that prenatal care and delivery is not done at a military hospital, but rather off-post through local facilities.

"I was stressed and really worried about being seen off-base," said Rachel Peterson who delivered her third child in April at the Horst Schmidt Klinik in Wiesbaden.

According to Daphne Jean, obstetrics nurse at Wiesbaden Army Airfield Health Clinic, Peterson's reaction is normal and typical of the pregnant women she sees.

"It doesn't matter whether it's their first or their third, when they're told that we don't have the facilities here and they must be seen off-post many get extremely upset and nervous," Jean said.

Moms-to-be in Wiesbaden and Dexheim are given a list of area doctors who have been approved through Tricare. They are referred to the patient liaison office for help with directions and appointments.

Not knowing what to expect and being concerned about the language barrier, Peterson went on the advice of a friend and chose Angela Westerborg, a doctor located in downtown Wiesbaden. Once she got through the first appointment her anxiety was relieved.

"After seeing her [Westerburg], I was more comfortable. She spoke great English and went over everything with me," said Peterson.

Not all patients however, have the same fear of being seen by a local doctor on the economy.

"I actually looked forward to seeing a specialist rather than a general practitioner during my pregnancy," said Fiona Jones, who also chose Westerborg as her provider during her pregnancy which culminated in the birth of her second child, Miles, earlier this year.

"She is terrific. She understood me and my concerns, and I completely understood her. It was a good experience," said Jones.

Both women commented on Westerborg's approach during their first visit. Peterson said that Westerborg explained what type of care was available on the German economy and what



Photo by Cassandra Kardeke

**Vernetta Bell looks over at a monitor during a stress test at St. Josef's Hospital in Wiesbaden two weeks before her due date.**

to expect in regards to medical care during the pregnancy, delivery and post-natal care.

When asked how she felt the day she was informed she would be seen off-post by a local doctor, Vernetta Bell, due May 17, simply stated, "I was horrified."

Husband Pfc. Cedric Bell of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Division Support Command, felt otherwise.

"I remember that too, but I wasn't as scared as she was. I kept telling her it would be okay," he said.

Eight and a half months later, both Bells are completely satisfied with the care they received.

"It's not like in the States where the doctor you see through the pregnancy delivers the baby," said Jones.

In fact, unless there are serious com-

plications, deliveries are done by midwives in Germany.

"I was worried at first knowing there wouldn't be a doctor, but it's the most wonderful thing. There are different methods to choose from like the birthing ball or the birthing stool. It's actually fun," said Bell who now prefers the midwife over the doctor.

"If you want to push, you can push. There's no waiting, no counting. With a midwife, it's more or less your way which makes you more comfortable during the labor," she said.

"The best thing a mom can do is to be well informed, have a birth plan and ask lots of questions," Jones said.

Jones recommended pregnant women do their homework during their pregnancy. Look into different birthing methods, tour the hospital and when

visiting the midwife, ask about procedures and care.

"Some places don't offer an epidural, others use the birthing stool. It's certainly much better to know all the services available at the hospital you choose before going into labor and discovering things are not available," Jones said.

Three Wiesbaden hospitals are available to choose from — HSK, St. Josef's and the Paulinen Klinik, according to Jean. Dexheim patients can choose between the University Klinik, St. Vincenz and St. Hildegards all in Mainz.

"Whichever hospital you choose be sure to bring plenty of snacks and food," said Peterson's husband, Capt. Eric Peterson of the 19th Support Center.

"I had just gone in for a checkup but they admitted me just after the lunch hour, so I had nothing to eat until dinner," Peterson said.

European meals are lighter than American meals. The Petersons recommend not only packing a diaper bag and another bag for the mom but one filled with a variety of snacks and water.

"The hospital only offered bubble water, so if you are not yet accustomed to drinking it you should pack bottled water," Peterson said.

Another tip the Petersons added was to doublecheck the medical chart after visiting with the midwife at the hospital of your choice.

"My chart indicated that I spoke both English and German, so when the time came, I only had nurses and staff who spoke German," Peterson said. Fortunately for Peterson, her roommate spoke both languages and served as a translator during her stay in the hospital. Overall Peterson still considered the experience and care exceptional.

"It's normal for the patients to be apprehensive about being seen off-base. So far I haven't had any complaints, and many come back later and tell me what a pleasant experience it was," said Jean.

Currently both the Wiesbaden and Dexheim communities are expecting more than 300 births in the next five months.

Be sure to pick up the next issue of the *Herald Union*, May 26 for another in-depth article on the community baby boom.

Pregnant? Recently had a baby in Germany? The 221st BSB Public Affairs Office wants to hear from you. Share your story and experiences with other soon-to-be moms. Send email to [221bsbpao@104asg.army.mil](mailto:221bsbpao@104asg.army.mil).